

Please accept this letter to submit to the Prison Issues Board and also the meeting of the Montana Legislative Committee on MSP budget issues. It is our understanding these bodies will meet next on December 9 and 16, respectively.

We are concerned about the lack of educational opportunities on the High Side at MSP. Education is a known positive influence on inmate behavior and recidivism. By all information, education for inmates serves a purpose that benefits inmates, prisons and society as a whole.

The new warden told the press that his top priority is rehabilitation. The High Side at MSP would be a good place to start improving prison education. The computer vo-tech class that had been offered to inmates was cancelled almost one year ago. Those inmates who had been participating in the computer vo-tech class appreciated the opportunity and were disappointed when it ended. Currently the only education offered is GED classes.

If Corrections can't afford paid teachers, let the inmates propose courses and teach them. Several penitentiaries are doing this. You can learn more through a blog called "Education Behind Bars" written by Christopher Zaukis who resides in Petersburg Penitentiary in Virginia.

Thank you for submitting our letter. Please confirm receipt.

Respectfully,

Mary Coster and John Krigger